

In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of ensuring proper contact between a plurality of substrates and a lifting device with a plurality of vacuum pads in a semiconductor packaging process wherein the substrates are placed, one each, in depressions in a substrate tray, each depression having a hole, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a substrate tray having depressions therein with a substrate in each said depression, each depression having a hole;

providing and raising a plate with a plurality of protrusions ~~through the tray, with~~ each protrusion extending ~~going~~ through a different said hole ~~and lifting~~ and maintaining level or leveling the substrate in the corresponding depression while lifting said substrate concurrently with the other of said the plurality of substrates in the other of said depressions ~~protrusions~~;

providing and then lowering the lifting device having vacuum pads onto the tray;

stopping the lifting device when the vacuum pads from the lifting device comes into contact with the substrates; and

applying a vacuum at the vacuum pads to temporarily attach the substrates to the vacuum pads.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the protrusions on the plate are of sufficient height to lift the substrates up off the bottom of the tray.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the protrusions on the plate are of sufficient height to lift the substrates up off the bottom of the tray and over the depressions in which they lie ~~lay~~.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the holes in the tray are sufficiently ~~size~~ sized to permit the protrusions to come through the bottom of the tray.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the holes in the tray are sufficiently small ~~enough~~ to prevent the substrates from falling through.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises ~~comprising~~ the step of raising the lifting device out of the tray after applying the vacuum.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the protrusions are arranged in a two-dimensional array on the plate.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the protrusions are arranged in a linear array on a strip and a plurality of strips are joined to form the plate.

9-21 (canceled)